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AUTHOR Sapon-Shevin, Mara
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ABSTRACT

This book critically examines gifted education in America as a demonstration of meritocracy and elitism in education. It is contended that, by creating and funding gifted programs, schools engage in a form of "educational triage", providing high quality education to an elite minority. The book addresses questions concerning the relationship between tracking and gifted education, assumptions underlying support for gifted education, the limited discourse about the validity of gifted education, and the interests served by this limited discourse. Alternative ways of thinking about education which do not involve identifying, labeling, and separating children as "gifted" are then offered. Inclusive schools are proposed and suggestions given of how curriculum can be structured in purposefully heterogeneous classrooms. Individual chapters have the following titles: (1) "Underserved and Over-Deserving: Rationales for the Support of Gifted Education"; (2) "They're Good, They Don't Ask: Silence and Voice on Gifted Education"; (3) "It Takes a Special Person To Work with Those Kids: Teachers and the Gifted Category"; (4) "These Kids Really Show Themselves Early: Choosing Children for the Enrichment Program"; (5) "I Only Want What's Best for My Child: Parents and Gifted Education"; (6) "The Kids with Disposable Incomes: Meritocracy and Gifted Education"; and (7) "Visions of an Inclusive Future." Contains 115 references. (DB)

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